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AUTHOR Nearine, Robert J.; Freedman, Albert I.
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ABSTRACT

The paper suggests a strategy for developing a program for gifted and talented limited English speaking students. Six steps are outlined: (1) identify the gifted and talented student population in the pilot school using at least two acceptable criteria; (2) based on the school study team (SST) assessment process, prepare individual sequential instructional plans for each student; (3) based on the SST assessment process, develop a project profile; (4) using the project needs plan for guidance, develop a staff training component; (5) develop effective administrative arrangements for program implementation, replication, and dissemination; and (6) develop a high degree of supportive parental/community involvement. (SBH)

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DEVELOPING PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKER

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Robert J. Nearine
Hartford Public Schools
&
Albert I. Freedman
The University of Hartford

Man is an orderly creature. He classifies, lists, and groups. In this quest to make order from chaos, he finds it easy to dismiss exceptionality as extremes are grouped around a mean. One of these forgotten extremes has been the gifted youngster who has a limited English proficiency.

Why this forgotten population? While any number of tentative reasons might be cited, suffice it to say that many efforts to work with exceptionalities have omitted the consideration of a language gap. This limited English proficiency became an obstacle to academic success since most instruction was in English. And, while some native speakers may have received English as a Second Language assistance, these efforts were generally aimed at mainstream assimilation with little thought given to the unique problems of the exceptional child. Even two landmark pieces of national legislation, the Bilingual Education Act of 1965 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, PL94-142 did little to ease the problem. While the Bilingual Education Act would fund programs for limited English speakers, and PL94-142 might help with their handicap neither law provided the assistance which was needed by the student whose handicap was not physical, mental, or linguistic but stem med instead from a programmatic gap. Those youngsters who are effectively "handicapped" by inadequate identificational techniques, a lack of effective strategies for developing differentiated programs, and minimal program resources are not considered by either of the acts.

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Consider the typical so called "bilingual" youngster. The term itself is a misnomer. To many, a bilingual youngster is one who is fluent not only in his native language but in English as well. Thus, a bilingual youngster should be able to cope with his own and the majority culture while fitting into and being accommodated by existing programs for the gifted, the handicapped, or the emotionally disturbed. Theoretically, the bilingual youngster should exhibit the same kind of problems and respond to the same solutions as do his mainstream peers.

Unfortunately, many of these so-called bilingual youngsters are by no means bilingual; they speak and read in their native language alone. While educators expect that a majority of these pupils will become truly bilingual as they progress through an appropriate education process, at the time of entrance most have but a limited English speaking proficiency. In fact, many of these youngsters are often illiterate not only in English but in their native tongue as well. And like all students in a school population, they vary. Some are bright and talented or gifted while others are handicapped, limited or slow. These youngsters display the characteristics found in every other pupil population except for one thing; they lack the ability to communicate in the English tongue.

While many of these conditions are being addressed by newly initiated bilingual programs existing efforts are often too new, too politically entwined, and too under-funded to have produced massive evidences of results . While the success potential seems favorable hard data are just beginning to appear, while research on programs for the handicapped or gifted limited English speaker are still virtually non-existent.

This lack of extensive data raises a number of questions. While the literature may abound with studies which point out that typical school and psychological measures may not be appropriate for use with non-white, non-English speaking, non-typical middle class youngsters only a limited set of alternatives have been developed. The use of non-verbal testing techniques administered through interpreters represent, at best, a partial solution. And while the actual measures may be the same as those which are used in a non-English-speaking country, the fact that they are not usually administered in the native language is a distinct drawback. Then too, there may be a reluctance on the part of some professionals to use instruments which they feel are inappropriate for non-English speaking youngsters. Thus, some children who should be in special placements have not been identified, may not be tested, and probably will not be served.

There are added evidences to support the contention that the special educational needs of linguistic minorities are not being fully met. Based on its latest 1970 figures, the National Center for Education Statistics has estimated that 3,158,000 exceptional children were enrolled in the special education programs in the United States schools. This number represented about 7% of the total school enrollment. Of this number an estimated 481,000 pupils, or about 1% of the nation's total enrollment, were in gifted programs . No information on ethnic or linguistic enrollments was presented.

Despite the lack of adequate research the need to develop a structure for programming gifted limited English speakers was a real one. To meet this need a strategy was developed. While aimed at a group of limited English-speaking

gifted youngsters in an urban school setting, there seems every reason to believe that this strategy can be applied to other limited or non-English speaking populations as well.

The strategy evolved is a simple one. First a series of goals are identified with steps delineated for their accomplishment. Next known and tested learning procedures are applied to each step in the process which leads to a cited goal. And, finally, a multi-disciplinary resource team monitors and documents each step of the process. On the basis of this documentation, resource team members and the program staff can cooperatively identify practices, materials, and instruments which appear to work, pinpoint gaps and problem areas, and construct plans to deal with perceived problems. The total process builds on logical and known expertise. It is characterized by a cost/effective, goal-oriented process which limits the possibility of wasted efforts in any attempt to reinvent the "wheel".

In order to develop a program for a gifted and talented limited-English speaking population, several steps should be followed. The target population must be identified using acceptable criteria and in accord with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Following the rules is particularly important if a program is to be supported with state or federal funds. Generally speaking, one acceptable procedure is to solicit nominations from persons having a knowledge of gifted and talented youngsters; teachers, parents, peers, and perhaps even community members as well. Next, these nominations should be reviewed by a representative study team for some indication of giftedness; general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, leadership ability, talent in the visual or

performing arts, or perhaps psychomotive ability. While these characteristics are typically validated with measurements or with detailed documentation, for the limited-English speaker variations in the nomination and review procedure should initially be considered as the norm. For these youngsters, inadequate test scores and less specific documentation may be expected. In fact, less precise nominations should even be encouraged.

Once the nominations have been completed all nominees should be tested using whatever intelligence and achievement measures are appropriate. Because of obvious instrument limitations, test data should be supplemented by input from a multi-disciplinary team located preferably at the school level. In this way, traditional and non-traditional evidences of a high level of general intellectual ability, academic aptitude, or talent can be considered and examined by teachers, parents, pupil personnel staff members, specialists in the area of giftedness and in bilingualism, parents, and other who understand the child as well as the presented evidences of giftedness. Since any number of views can be put forth during this process the selection of youngsters who show more than one indication of giftedness and/or of talent, but who may demonstrate these gifts in a wide variety of ways should result.

While the suggested strategy generally follows the process which is used to nominate and select youngsters from the overall gifted and talented population, there are some notable differences. To cope with imperfect instrumentation and the assumption that the usual procedures may not result in definitive nominations or selections, a resouce team concept was developed. Here bilingual, gifted, and other area specialists are teamed to observe and

carefully document all processes as these occur, examine instrumentation, point out process strengths and weaknesses, and suggest areas which require modification or further development. In order to adequately provide for varied judgemental approaches, the resource team does not interact with the project team or with school study teams as a given step in the process is underway. Only after each step has been completed will the team meet with the staff to share documentation, compare notes, and look at overall process strategies. If theddocumentation, has been a thorough one, a meeting of the minds should occur which will result in suggested changes or corrective actions; if not added discussion and the sharing of expertise should occur. Since the resource team functions as a process auditor to look at and critically examine information, only upon completion of this examination can the team effectively interact with the staff to make suggestions and recommendations.

Once each step in the process has been documented and the resource team and staff have agreed upon strategies for change or modification, specific management tasks are established. Time frames, assignment responsibilities, and developmental plans are stated and resources are allocated for their accomplishment. These tasks fall to an administrator, and preferably one who has decision making powers with a level of authority sufficient to allocate resources needed to make the recommended changes occur. While the administrator need not necessarily be a part of the project staff he should be in a position to monitor the developmental process, see that commitments are met, and generally coordinate and facilitate the allocation of both internal and external resources.

As developmental activities occur the resource team continues to monitor

the process, document activities, and feed back information to staff and administration. Thus the strategy is virtually self-correcting. Note however, that two sets of activities are embedded in the strategy. One is the process of selecting, serving, and evaluating students who will take part in the gifted program. The second is intended to fill in selection procedure gaps, create new program strategies, and develop or modify instrumentation to make the total process responsive. Both processes take place simultaneously; both are monitored; and both produce documentation which is fed back to staff as a basis for on going program and process refinement.

Table 1 summarizes a series of goals, processes, and outcomes which have been specified for the implementation of an elementary school program for limited English-speaking gifted youngsters. Table 2 shows in schematic form, how the program can be monitored together with the major decision points where information will be fed back to the participants. Both tables represent projected activities which may be modified as a result of the monitoring process.

TABLE 1

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION FOR GIFTED/TALENTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS OF LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY

A. Objectives	B. Processes	C. Outcomes
1. To identify the gifted and talented pupil population in the pilot school using at least two acceptable criteria.	1.1 Teacher, parent, and where appropriate, peer and community nominations will be solicited. Nominations will reflect giftedness in at least one of the following areas: - General intellectual ability - Specific academic aptitude - Leadership ability - Talent in visual or performing arts - Superior pychomotor ability	1.1 Teacher validated nominations using cited criteria.
	1.2 Nominees will be tested using available intelligence and achievement measures. Nominees will also be assessed for evidences of a high level of general intellectual ability and/or specific academic aptitudes, and/or talent using School Study Teams (SST-Appendix C) procedures.	1.2 Identified project pupils.
	1.3 Bilingual and gifted specialists will document processes used, identify process strengths and weaknesses, and specify areas requiring modification and/or development.	1.3 Time frames, responsibility assignments, and developmental plans are stated.

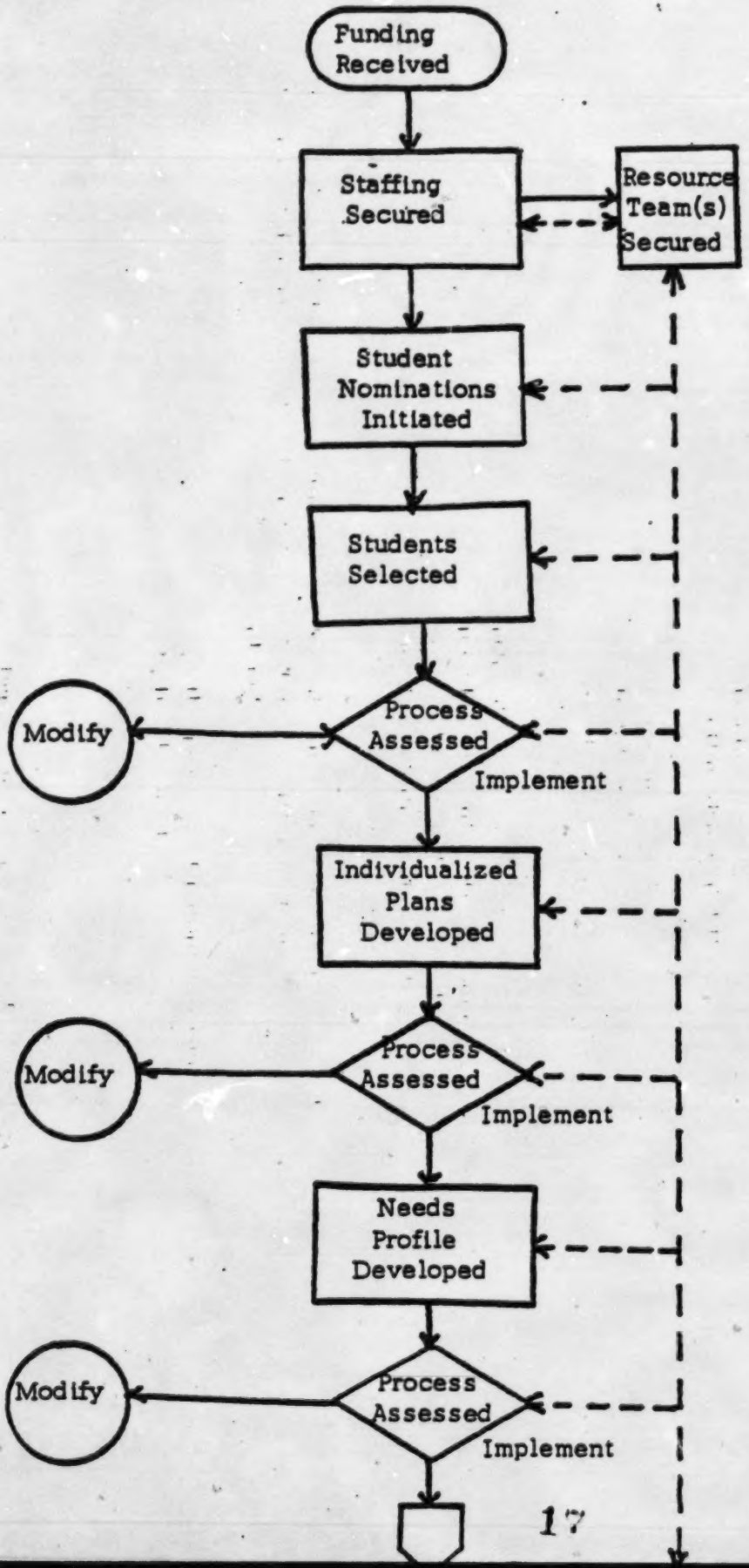
A.	Objectives	B.	Processes	C.	Outcomes
2.	Based on the SST assessment process, Individual Sequential Instructional Plans (ISIP) will be prepared for each pupil.	2.	ISIP plans will be reviewed by teachers, project staff, and/or resource personnel to: - ascertain needs assessment accuracy, - develop individualized and differentiated learning programs for each student, - develop and maintain a continuous process for assessing ISIP suitability, - develop a process to revise and refine each ISIP as required, and - develop an effective way to consult with and interpret ISIP progress to parents.	2.	ISIP verification process which can insure plan congruence to: - pupil needs assessment, - differentiated curriculum and instructional materials, - continuous revision and refinement, - evidence of parental involvement.
3.	Based largely on the SST assessment process, a project needs profile will be developed.	3.	Project instructional needs profile will identify: - curriculum needs, - training needs, - communication needs, and - replication needs.	3.	Time frames, responsibility assignments, development plans, and resources are stated in the areas of: - curriculum development adoption/adaption, - training processes and programs, - replication requests.

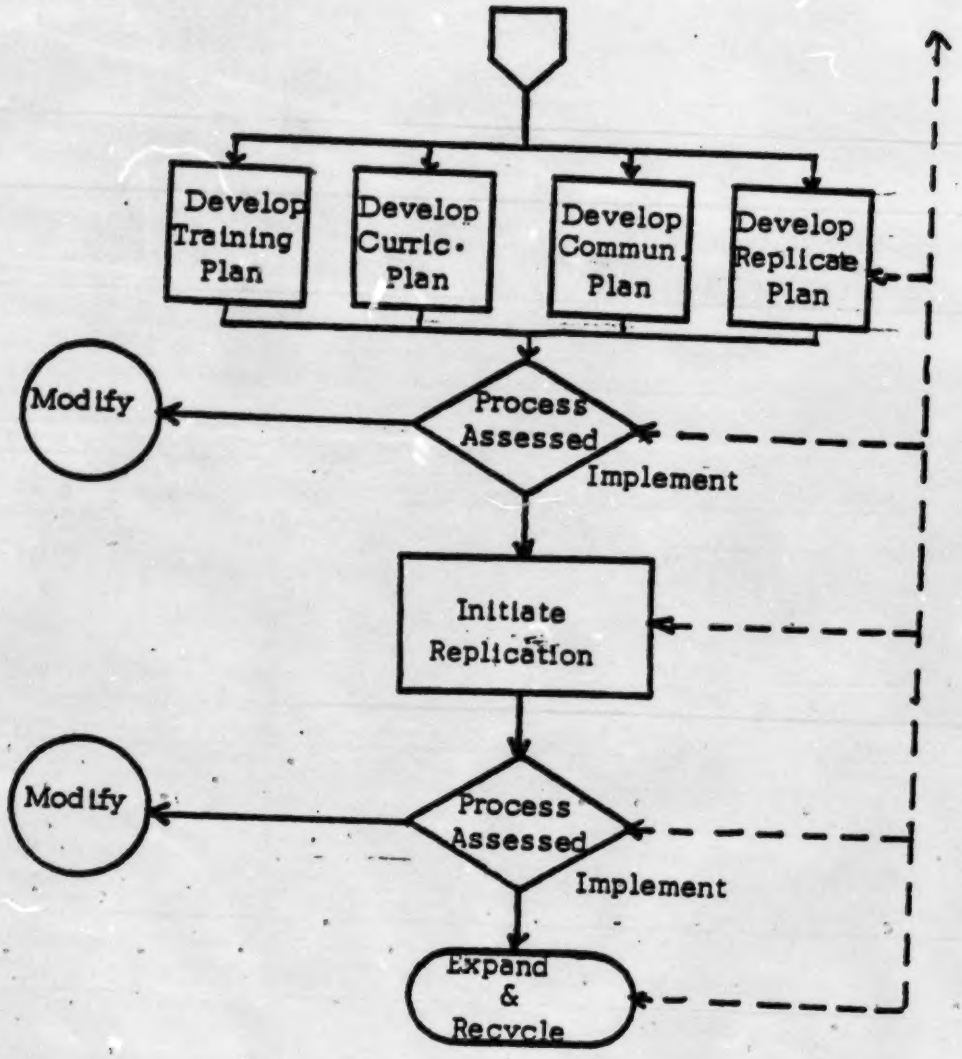
A. Objectives	B. Processes	C. Outcomes
4. Using the project needs plan for guidance a staff training component will be developed.	4. Project staff, resource personnel, pilot school staff, school system personnel and community representatives will collaboratively design the staff training component utilizing a process which will: - determine student needs and learning styles - identify teacher skills needed to meet identified needs and styles - assess present skill level of teachers - build on existent skill levels - assess skill achievement	4. A self-connecting training format, skill sequences, available and needed resources, and time sequences will be stated.
5. To develop effective administrative arrangements for program implementation, replication and dissemination.	5. School and project staff, assisted by resource and school system personnel will plan for project needs such as: - a resource room - expanded library resources - tutorial and small group instructional areas - community resource utilization - extended school day schedule	5. Administrative and logistical plans, areas of responsibility, and time frames together with effectiveness criteria will be stated.

A. Objectives	B. Processes	C. Outcomes
	- mainstreaming assignments - continued non-public student and staff involements - training requirements - seeding and replication support. (The above are examples of possible administrative arrangements which may be required. Specific requirements will be determined by the project.)	
6. To develop a high degree of supportive parental/community involvement.	6.1 Parents and community representatives will assist in planning: - the process of parent/commun- involvement - parent/teacher conferences - the assessment of parent/ community involvement	6.1 A process and product plan containing critical bench marks, assignments of responsibility, and evaluative criteria will be stated.
	6.2 As implementers, parents and community representatives will function as: - resource personnel - volunteer assistants - tutors - trainees	6.2 The parent/community involvement plan will identify as a minimum available and needed resources, and resource commitments.

TABLE 2

PROGRAM MONITORING PLAN




Develop Training Plan
Develop Curric. Plan
Develop Commun. Plan
Develop Replicate Plan
Modify
Process Assessed
Implement
Initiate Replication
Modify
Process Assessed
Implement
Expand & Recycle

While Tables 1 and 2 describe a strategy which can be used to implement and monitor a program, the objectives and the monitoring were designed for a particular school district. When applying the strategy to other gifted and talented populations a district should identify its own objectives, processes, and outcomes. It should delineate decision points where outside input is required and refine the monitoring process so as to conform to local ground rules. Given this flexibility it seems logical to assume that the strategy can be applied to the development of differentiated programs for other limited or non-English speaking populations. With this in mind, the strategy is proposed as one way to meet the program needs of an often forgotten population; those youngsters who are gifted and talented but do not speak the English language.